

# What is the College- & Career-Ready Policy Institute?

The College- & Career-Ready Policy Institute (Institute) is helping leading states—including Arizona—accelerate their efforts to ensure every student graduates from high school ready for college and productive careers. States are participating in the Institute from September 2008 through December 2009.

The Institute builds on the momentum of the 2005 National Educational Summit on High Schools and the American Diploma Project (ADP) Network, a partnership created after the summit that now includes 33 states. To improve college and career readiness for all students, ADP Network states are working on four priorities:

1. Align high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school.
2. Require all graduates to take challenging courses that actually prepare them for life after high school.
3. Streamline the assessment system so that the tests students take in high school also can serve as readiness tests for college and work.
4. Hold high schools accountable for graduating students who are ready for college or careers, and holding postsecondary institutions accountable for students' success once enrolled.

Among the ADP states, most have made significant progress on these first three priorities but no state has yet fully transformed its accountability system to make graduating all students college- and career-ready the central priority. To provide a handful of states with intensive assistance to identify new policy solutions, five national organizations—**Achieve**, **Data Quality Campaign**, **EducationCounsel**, **Jobs for the Future** and the **National Governors Association Center for Best Practices**—jointly created the Institute, which is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

After a competitive selection process, eight leading states in the ADP Network were selected to participate in the Institute: **Arizona**, **Arkansas**, **Georgia**, **Louisiana**, **Minnesota**, **New Mexico**, **Ohio**, and **Tennessee**.

## Policy Outcomes

The national partners are helping each participating state develop a state-specific policy plan organized around the following **broad policy outcomes**:

- Clear goals for improving high school graduation, college- and career-readiness, and postsecondary attainment rates.
- An assessment system that measures how well students are prepared for college and careers.
- A school accountability system that makes college- and career-readiness a central priority, creates incentives for progress and continuous improvement, and provides effective supports and interventions for low-performing districts and schools.
- New options and supports for boosting the achievement of low-income students and other groups at high risk of not achieving college-ready standards and college success.

Each state has established a cross-sector leadership team comprised of the governor's representative, the department of education, and higher education, business and legislative leaders. This team establishes the priorities, timetable and overall direction for the state's work. By the end of this process, each state is expected to formally present its plan for these new policies to the appropriate governing bodies.

## Benefits and Supports for Arizona

Through the College & Career-Ready Policy Institute, Arizona will have access to leading state and national education policy experts and research, as well as receive customized policy-development support. The full range of support includes:

### Policy Analysis and Research

- Institute partner organizations have reviewed each participating state's existing policies to surface any knowledge gaps, research needs, and identify the potential barriers or concerns that a state may expect to confront in pursuing the policy agenda.

### In-State Technical Assistance

- Institute partner organizations provide customized state-specific assistance and policy development support on issues unique to Arizona. Representatives from the core partner organizations travel to Arizona throughout the two-year Institute and craft policy advice on priority issues identified by the state's working team.

### Cross-State Technical Assistance

- All eight participating states come together for three Leadership Sessions designed to provide significant opportunities for leaders to address key challenges and opportunities associated with advancing the Institute outcomes, as well as planning time, tools, expert advice from partner organizations, networking, and cross-fertilization among states. The next Leadership Session will take place in Arizona in March 2009.

## Key Milestones of the Policy Institute

The work within the Policy Institute will be paced and sequenced to build in opportunities for Arizona to preview, discuss, develop, and ultimately commit to strategies for each of the policy outcomes. The specific sequences and prioritization will unfold in each of the Institute states in a unique fashion given priorities, forcing events, and each state's context. However, the partners will use the following timetable to guide their work:

- **Policy Institute Launch Meeting (September 2008)**
- **Session I: Brief states on key policy issues and considerations (November 12 2008)**
- **Arizona submits first draft policy plan (February 2009)**
  - ⇒ Draft "stretch" college and career readiness goals that set the overall direction for Arizona.
  - ⇒ Draft strategy for creating a comprehensive and coherent high school assessment system that measures college- and career-readiness.
  - ⇒ Draft strategy for the development of valid and reliable accountability system of indicators.
- **Session II: Partners offer draft feedback on policy plan (March 2009)**
- **Arizona submits second draft policy plan for partner review (June 2009)**
  - ⇒ Plan includes plans for all policy outcomes.
  - ⇒ Plan should also address communications and implementation challenges.
- **Arizona receives feedback from the partners on the policy plan (August 2009)**
- **Session III: Finalize Policy Plan (November 2009)**
  - ⇒ Finalize policy plan.
  - ⇒ Finalize public roll out strategy.
  - ⇒ Refine sustainability strategy.
- **Finalize policy plan and present to governing bodies for action (Winter 2010)**